



**State of Connecticut**  
**House Of Representatives**

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**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 284**  
**An Act Concerning Benefits For Certain Veterans Who Have Been Diagnosed With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Or**  
**Traumatic Brain Injury Or Who Have Had An Experience Of Military Sexual Trauma.**

Senator Flexer, Senator Martin, Representative Hennessey, Representative Ferraro, and esteemed members of the Veterans Affairs Committee:

I am pleased to join Fairfield resident, Steve Kennedy, Connecticut team lead for the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). In addition to being an Army veteran who served in Iraq, Steve is a Dad and a student working on his PhD in biophysical chemistry. He is a fearless advocate for veterans, particularly those most vulnerable.

Today I join Steve, and other veterans around the state, in supporting SB 284, which will extend state benefits to veterans with other than honorable discharges related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury or Military Sexual Trauma.

State benefits would include services from Rocky Hill Veterans' Home, tuition waivers, workforce development, hiring preferences, DMV fee waivers and property tax exemption, as well as burial assistance and hospital care.

As the daughter of a Vietnam Veteran who received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star with a V for valor, I have learned about the impact of trauma related to combat and military service. In work in the community as a suicide prevention trainer, I am aware of how important it is to provide supports and services for those at risk. These veterans are at risk and need the ability to access services that could be life-saving.

I hope you will join me in supporting this bill with an affirmative vote in the Veterans' Committee.

Sincerely,

*Cristin McCarthy Vahey*

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